

Our National Condition, and its Remedy.

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE

PINE STREET CHURCH,

BOSTON,

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 1856.

BY

HENRY M. DEXTER.

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Boston, June 30th, 1856.

REV. HENRY M. DEXTER :

DEAR SIR :—The sermon recently delivered by you, upon “The Moral Causes of our National Condition, and the Remedy they Suggest,” was heard with much pleasure and profit, by the members of your Congregation ; and, at a meeting held for the purpose, the undersigned were appointed a Committee to request a copy for publication.

We are pleased to assure you, that the principles advanced, and the calm and Christian style of the discussion, are, in our opinion, eminently calculated to do good, and to promote the cause of freedom, and of Christianity.

With the highest respect and affection,

We are your friends and parishioners,

CHARLES DEMOND,	}	Committee.
JOEL WHEELER,		
JOHN TIRRELL,		
B. W. WILLIAMS,		
W. H. HOLLISTER,		
EDW. THAXTER,		
JOSEPH T. BAILEY,		
J. B. WHITMORE,		
J. P. BIRD.		

GENTLEMEN :

I yield to the request you have made, because it is possible that there may be some facts referred to in the discourse to which you allude, which may have lapsed from the general memory ; to recall which—by whatsoever agency—may be a public benefit.

With many thanks for your expressions of personal kindness,

I am, affectionately yours,

H. M. DEXTER.

CHARLES DEMOND, ESQ., AND OTHERS,
Committee of Pine St. Congregation.

Hillside, Roxbury, July 7, 1856.

NOTE.—Several paragraphs, omitted in the delivery of the discourse for want of time, are here included, and a few notes have been added, in further proof of some of the positions taken.

H. M. D.

SERMON.

OUT OF THE SOUTH COMETH THE WHIRLWIND.—Job xxxvii. 9.

You will bear me witness that, while I have never made any concealment of my deep convictions of the essential wickedness of American Slavery, and the danger to be apprehended from its continued existence and influence, I have not been in the habit of obtruding those convictions upon you;—have, indeed, almost never made them the distinct and elaborate subject of pulpit discourse.

To-day, I must speak. And I know that you will patiently hear.

I have delayed what I have to say, purposely, until the immediate fervor of feeling, excited by recent unexampled and infamous occurrences, has had time to subside into the calmer and deliberate inquiry, what those occurrences, and the underlying purpose which they express, demand, in the way of action, at our hands.

And now, let no man suppose that I am about to preach a “political” discourse. Nothing is further from my intention. I am about to preach THE GOSPEL—as I understand it, and as I believe Christ understands it—in its simple and practical application to the actual, alarming state of things, now existing among us. If the Bible is “a light that shineth in a dark place,” then the Bible must have something for the illumination of our present gloom. If the gospel is a message of “peace on earth, and good will toward men,” then the gospel is just the message which our land is perishing to

hear. Jesus preached practical wisdom for this world, as well as pointed out the way to a better. And if any man thinks if our Savior were now a citizen of these United States, a member of the American church, and a preacher in American pulpits, he would confine his utterances to abstract truth ; would prescribe for all possible diseases except those with which the people are dying ; would confer with the Publishing Committee of the American Tract Society, as to the point whether his opinions are “calculated to receive the approbation of Christians of all denominations usually termed evangelical,” North and South, before opening his mouth, or taking up his pen ; if any man thinks this, I point him to the record ; I ask him why the Herodians “took council against him to destroy him ;” why the Nazarenes “rose up and thrust him out of their city ;” why the Galileans “were filled with madness” against him ; why the Jews “took up stones to stone him ;” why the Chief Priests and Pharisees “sent officers to take him ?” Why ? Because he preached no abstract gospel, emasculated of all reference to actual sinners, and actual sin ; because he denounced lawyers, and scribes, and pharisees, to their face, as hypocrites ; because, regardless of statute and police, he scourged out of the temple precincts those who were legally making it “a den of thieves ;” because, ever and everywhere, he set at naught whatever ordinances, or customs, or prejudices, interfered with the freest enunciation of his views upon all matters on which he chose to speak—on which the interests of a dying world demanded that he should speak ; because—so far as sin is concerned—he “came not to send peace, but a sword.”

Brethren ! as I love my Lord, and hope for heaven through his blood, I can conceive of no insult more painful to his compassionate heart, than that which is offered to his character and teaching, by those who so misunderstand the first, and so misrepresent the last, as to make them set their approving seal of silence upon wickedness that is popular ;

as to make the New Testament a dumb accomplice with American slavery, and its inherent indescribable abominations.

I have not so learned Christ. I seem to hear his voice, louder than seven trumpets, commanding—go, preach the preaching that I bid thee ; preach the gospel to the poor, heal the broken-hearted, preach deliverance to the captives, set at liberty them that are bound, preach righteousness, (that is to say, all manner of right life ; right life in all manner of things,) in the great congregation.

So, God helping me, will I preach. I will preach righteousness to-day, in reference to the aggressions of the Slave Power upon the liberty of this land.

There is one rule which we may use with confidence whenever we approach a subject, vast and obscure, requiring action. It is this. Search the matter to its depths, and counsel action only so far, and in such manner, as common sense, applying the facts thus discovered to sound first principles, shall justify and demand. In this manner let us proceed. It would take much less time, and be every way easier, to yield, at once, to the pressure of feeling ; to let the hot words leap from the lip ; to denounce and upbraid ; with fit epithets to utter what an honest human heart really feels about the cowardly and treacherous onslaught which, in the name of law, is being made upon the law, for the basest ends. But what we now need is action,—calm, considerate, conscientious, Christian ; and such action can only result from previous patient investigation of facts, and comparison of principles. We may safely yield to impulse, so far as to accept its earnest assertion that the time for action has arrived. But to determine what that action ought to be, we must take counsel of history, of conscience, and of God.

I propose, then, to inquire what have been the moral causes of the existing state of things among us, and what action they suggest for remedy. In this inquiry, I shall be compelled to refer, somewhat largely, to matters which it is

not grateful to bring into the pulpit upon the Sabbath ; but only so far, I trust, as may plead the divine permission for works of necessity and mercy. They are a necessity to any just understanding of the subject, and such an understanding both necessity and mercy demand.

These causes group themselves into two general divisions, which may be distinguished as external and internal—the former consisting of certain outward occurrences and political acts, the latter of certain interior principles and facts ;—in which order they claim our notice.

I. WHAT ARE THOSE CHIEF OUTWARD OCCURRENCES AND GOVERNMENTAL ACTS WHICH HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO BRING OUR NATIONAL AFFAIRS TO THEIR PRESENT STATE ?

1. *I name, first, the introduction of negro slavery to this continent.*

This underlies the whole. It is the black seed out of which the overshadowing Upas has shot forth. In itself, and in all its natural issues, it is morally evil, and only evil, and that continually. If good has come of it ; if black men are now in heaven who would not have been there without it, it is because God's strong arm often uses the current of a wicked river to turn the wheel of some good mill. Neither let us be over-hasty to decide that any preponderative amount of collateral good has been a side-growth of this system. If it be true that more black men are in heaven because of it, it is greatly to be feared that fewer white men are there ! God only can strike the balance. He will do it justly. It is our business not to settle his accounts, but to obey his plainest teaching, and act, in all things, by the sacred rule which he has given.

It appears to have been about the year 1525, almost an entire century before the Pilgrims were planning their voyage hither, that captured Africans were introduced to the West Indies to fill the gap which Spanish avarice had made in the

once teeming population of those beautiful isles. Personal servitude was, at this time, fast disappearing from Europe. The enlightened sentiment of that day was against slavery. "The spirit of the Christian religion," says Bancroft,* "would, *before the discovery of America*, have led to the entire abolition of the slave-trade, but for the hostility between the Christian church and the followers of Mahomet." As early as the twelfth century, Pope Alexander had written, "Nature having made no slaves, all men have an equal right to liberty." But the Turks sold their Christian captives into slavery, and the Christians, in retaliation, sold their captives, and the casuists of the church excused it, on the ground that the infidel was not within the pale of humanity. Africans were confused with their dark, Moorish brethren, and the cupidity of commerce successfully resisted the humanizing influence of the doctrines of the Bible. Las Casas, the friend and christianizer of the Indians, suggested the importation of Pagan Africans to relieve the severe trials of the scant population; a recommendation which he lived to see adopted, and to deplore with all his heart.

In the month of August, 1620, four months before the Mayflower dropped her anchor in Massachusetts Bay,† "more than a century after the last vestiges of hereditary slavery had disappeared from English society, and the English constitution, and six years after the Commons of France had petitioned for the emancipation of every serf in every fief," a Dutch man-of-war sailed up James River, and landed twenty negroes for sale on the soil of Virginia,—the date of the sad origin of this system upon our continent.

The Colony needed laborers. The negroes seemed well fitted to the climate and the exigency. They were bought. Others followed. The foul contagion spread to other Colonies. Georgia, alone, with singular foresight, resisted it, for a time,

* History of U. S., vol. i. p. 163.

† Bancroft, vol. i. p. 176.

by law : its Trustees declaring "that they did not wish to see their Province* void of white inhabitants, filled with blacks, the precarious property of a few, equally exposed to domestic treachery and foreign invasion." The German emigrants got over their scruples by writing home for advice and receiving in reply,† "If you take slaves in faith, and with intent of conducting them to Christ, the action will not be a sin, but may prove a benediction." New England participated in the guilt. A census shows that, in 1754, there were about one thousand slaves in Boston—more in proportion to the free white inhabitants than there are in Baltimore to-day. Newport was worse than Boston.‡ It was the great slave market of New England. Yet New England slavery was always mild in its type, and the slave codes of the South were wholly unknown.§ "Slaves were regarded as possessing the same legal rights as apprentices ; and masters, for abuse of their authority, were liable to indictment."

About the time of the Revolution, however, this system, never as yet vigorous on American soil, began to decay, especially at the North, and all over the land were found great and good men beginning to counsel together for its entire removal. It was felt to be a curse, a disgrace, and an inconsistency with the Declaration of Independence, which could not long be borne.

This brief sketch will have made it manifest that moral evil lay at the root of slavery in its beginnings here. Avarice in Dutch traders, laziness and easy virtue in Southern Colonists, introduced it. Laziness and avarice everywhere, leagued against the better judgment of the people, and the moral sense of Europe, continued it. When Samuel Hopkins, in the spirit of a martyr, lifted up his voice in his congregation of slaveholders and slavedealers, at Newport, in 1770, and in

* Hildreth's History of the U. S. vol. ii p. 368. † Vol. ii p. 418.

‡ Park's Life of Hopkins, p. 115. § Hildreth, vol. ii. p. 419.

the name of the Most High God, demanded deliverance for the captive, and the opening of prison doors to them that were bound—an act as bold, and threatening as much of personal inconvenience as the same act now, by any pastor in Charleston or Savannah—the sense of right, responsive to his words, was extensively repressed by considerations of the most mercenary character. New England rum could be profitably exchanged for slaves upon the coast of Africa ; New England blacksmiths could make money by forging fetters for the hapless victims, and so the infamy was attempted to be winked out of sight, or draped into comeliness under the mantle of commerce.

This was the first event standing in the relation of an external cause of our present condition as a nation.

2. *The second outward cause which I mention, was the Compromises of the Constitution.*

I have already hinted that the tendency of things at and after the Revolution was not for slavery. I might go further and say, that the spirit of the time which adopted our Federal Constitution appears to have been decidedly anti-slavery, and this to a considerable degree at the South as well as at the North. In Prince George's County, Va., in June, 1774, it was voted, in general meeting of the citizens, that* “the African slave trade is injurious to the Colony, because it obstructs the population of it by freemen, prevents manufacturers and other useful people from settling, and occasions an annual increase in the balance of trade against the Colony.” A similar meeting in Fairfax County, with George Washington in the chair, resolved that “it is the opinion of this meeting, that, during our present difficulties and distress, no slaves ought to be imported into any of the British Colonies ; and in this connection, we take the opportunity of declaring our most earnest wish to see an entire stop put to such a wicked, cruel, and unnatural trade.” No distinct provision in refer-

* American Archives, 4th series, i. p. 494.

ence to slavery appears in any State Constitution except that of Delaware, which provided that* “no person hereafter imported from Africa ought to be held in slavery under any pretence whatever,” and that “no negro, Indian, or mulatto slave ought to be brought into this State for sale from any part of the world.”

On the 20th of October, 1774, the Continental Congress unanimously resolved:† “We, for ourselves and the inhabitants of the several Colonies whom we represent, firmly agree and associate, under the sacred ties of virtue, honor and love of country, as follows: we will neither import nor purchase any slaves imported after the first day of December next, after which time we will wholly discontinue the slave trade, and we will neither be concerned in it ourselves, nor will we hire our vessels, nor sell our commodities or manufactures, to those who are concerned in it.”

In 1775, the same Congress voted a denial that “the Divine Author of our existence intended a part of the human race to hold an absolute property in, and unbounded power over, others.” In 1776, the Declaration of Independence was unanimously so phrased that it must be forever in glaring inconsistency with the continuance of a single slave on the soil of the nation. The Congress of 1787 (with the exception of a single negative from New York) unanimously adopted an ordinance providing that slavery should be forever excluded from all the national territory north-west of the river Ohio—now occupied by Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin. It is difficult to understand how the votes of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas, could have been unanimously given for this result—a result which appears to have sprung from no arrangement of compromise—except on the ground that slavery was then felt to be an evil which ought, at least, to be restricted to the original States.

* Hildreth, vol. iii. p. 39.

† Journals, i. 33.

Vermont had abolished slavery, by constitution, in 1777, and Massachusetts, in 1780. Pennsylvania passed an act of abolition, in 1780, and Connecticut and Rhode Island in 1784. In 1778, the Virginia Assembly, on motion of Jefferson, prohibited the further introduction of slaves; and, in 1782, passed an act facilitating emancipation. Maryland soon did the same.

An attempt to prohibit slavery was nearly successful in the convention that formed the Constitution of Kentucky, in 1780. It is on record, that a decided majority of the members of that convention—in all probability—would have voted for its exclusion, but for the great efforts of two large slaveholders of commanding influence.

A large proportion of the prominent patriots were abolitionists in feeling.* LaFayette purchased a plantation at Cayenne, concerning which he wrote from the prison of Magdeburg :† “I know not what disposition has been made of my plantation at Cayenne, but I hope Madame de LaFayette will take care that the negroes, who cultivate it, shall preserve their liberty;” and concerning which Washington wrote to the French patriot :‡ “Your late purchase of an estate in the Colony of Cayenne, with a view of emancipating the slaves on it, is a generous and noble proof of your humanity. Would to God a like spirit might diffuse itself generally into the minds of the people of this country.” So we find Washington writing to LaFayette, under date of April 5, 1783 :§ “The scheme, my dear Marquis, which you propose as a precedent to

* “Do you suppose, for a moment, that James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, George Washington, George Mason, and other abolitionists of that day—to use the word as we hear it used every day in Congress—imagined, that a provision so abhorrent to their general views,” (as the fugitive slave clause as now interpreted,) “had been inserted in the Constitution, and did not make it the subject of indignant comment in the convention or out of the convention”?—Robert Rantoul, in Congress, June 11, 1852.

† Sparks’ Life of Gouverneur Morris, vol. i. p. 410.

‡ Sparks’ Washington, vol. ix. p. 163. § Vol. viii. p. 414.

encourage the emancipation of the black people in this country from that state of bondage in which they are held, is a striking evidence of the benevolence of your heart. I shall be happy to join you in so laudable a work ; but will defer going into a detail of the business, till I have the pleasure of seeing you." September 9, 1786, Washington writes to John F. Mercer : * " I never mean, unless some particular circumstances should compel me to it, to possess another slave by purchase, it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted, by which slavery in this country may be abolished by law." In 1792, he writes to Gen. Pinckney of South Carolina : † " I must say that I lament the decision of your legislature upon the question of importing slaves after March, 1793. I was in hopes that motives of policy, as well as other good reasons, supported by the direful effects of slavery, which at this moment are presented, would have operated to produce a total prohibition of the importation of slaves, whenever the question came to be agitated in any State, that might be interested in the measure." So, in 1796, he writes to Sir John Sinclair,—accounting for the fact that land at that time in Pennsylvania was worth more, per acre, than better land in Maryland and Virginia, in part, ‡ " because there are laws here " (in Pennsylvania,) " for the gradual abolition of slavery, which neither of the two States above mentioned have at present, but which nothing is more certain than that they must have, and at a period not remote." In 1786, he wrote to Robert Morris, saying : § " There is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it," (slavery,) " but there is only one proper and effective mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by legislative authority, and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall never be wanting."

* Sparks, vol. ix. p. 159. † Vol. x. p. 224. ‡ Vol. xii. p. 326.

§ Vol. ix. p. 159.

Jefferson said: "I think a change is already perceptible. The spirit of the master is abating, that of the slave is rising from the dust, his condition mollifying, the way, I hope, preparing, under the auspices of Heaven, for a total emancipation."* Again he says, "I tremble for my country, when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever; that, considering numbers, nature, and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation," (of the master and the slave,) "is among possible events; that it may become probable by supernatural interference. The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest. But it is impossible to be temperate and pursue the subject."

Franklin, as President of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, on the third of February, 1790, affixed his signature to a memorial, addressed by that society to Congress, praying that body to exert its power to the fullest extent, to discourage the traffic in human flesh. The first sentence of that memorial is as follows:† "That, from a regard for the happiness of mankind, an association was formed, several years ago, in this State, by a number of her citizens of various religious denominations, for promoting the abolition of slavery, and for the relief of those unlawfully held in bondage." Its last sentence reads thus: "Under these impressions, they earnestly entreat your serious attention to the subject of slavery; that you will be pleased to countenance the restoration of liberty to those unhappy men, who, alone in this land of freedom, are degraded with perpetual bondage, and who, amidst the general joy of surrounding freemen, are groaning in servile subjection—that you will devise means for removing this inconsistency from the character of the American people—that you will promote mercy and justice towards this distressed race, and that you will step to the very verge of the

* Notes on Virginia.

† Federal Gazette, 1790.

power vested in you, for discouraging every species of traffic in the persons of your fellow men !”

William Pinckney said, before the Maryland House of Delegates, in 1789 : “ Sir, by the eternal principles of natural justice, no master in the State has a right to hold his slave in bondage for a single hour.”

Madison, in convention, when an attempt was made to introduce the term slave into the Constitution, said :* “ It must not be so ; because we intend this Constitution to be the great charter of human liberty to the unborn millions who shall enjoy its protection, *and who should never see that such an institution as slavery was ever known in our midst.*”

John Jay, addressing the Legislature of New York, said : “ The slaves, though held in bondage by the laws of men, are free by the laws of God ;” and he writes, from the Court of Spain, during the Revolution : “ An excellent law might be made for the general abolition of slavery. Till America comes into this measure, her prayers to Heaven will be impious. This is a strong expression, but it is just.”

This feeling of opposition to slavery, came out distinctly in several of the State conventions, which discussed and adopted the Federal Constitution. Patrick Henry said, in the Virginia convention :† “ Slavery is detested ; we feel its effects ; we deplore it with all the pity of humanity.”‡ In the same convention, Gov. Randolph said :§ “ They insist that the abolition of slavery will result from this Constitution. I hope that there is none here, who, considering the subject in the calm light of philosophy, will advance an objection so dishonorable to Virginia ; that, at the moment

* Madison Papers.

† Elliot's Debates, Virginia Convention, p. 431.

‡ Patrick Henry wrote to Robert Pleasants, Jan. 18, 1773 : “ I shall honor the Quakers for their noble efforts to abolish slavery. *It is a debt we owe to the purity of our religion, to show that it is at variance with the law which warrants slavery.*”

§ Debates in Convention, p. 437.

they are securing the rights of their citizens, an objection is started, that there is a spark of hope, that those unfortunate men now held in bondage, may, by the operation of the general government, be made free." Mr. Mason, the author of the Virginia Constitution, said, in that same convention, "The augmentation of slaves weakens the States, and such a trade is diabolical in itself, and disgraceful to mankind." In the North Carolina convention, Judge Iredell said :^{*} "When the entire abolition of slavery takes place, it will be an event which must be pleasing to every generous mind, and every friend of human nature." He adds, in reference to the twenty years' permission of the slave trade, "this was the utmost that could be obtained. I heartily wish more could have been done. But, as it is, this government is nobly distinguished above others, by that very provision." In the same convention, Mr. Galloway said, "I wish to see this abominable trade put an end to. I apprehend it," (the clause touching the slave trade, in the constitution,) "means to bring forward manumission."

In the Maryland convention, Luther Martin, who had helped to form the constitution they were discussing, said :[†] "We ought to authorize the general government to make such regulations as shall be thought most advantageous for the general abolition of slavery, and the emancipation of the slaves which are already in the states."

In the Pennsylvania convention, Judge Wilson—also one of the framers of the constitution—said,[‡] "I consider this," (the slave trade clause) "as laying the foundation for banishing slavery out of this country, and, though the period is more distant than I could wish, yet it will produce the same kind, gradual change, which was produced in Pennsylvania : the new states which are to be formed, will be under the

^{*} Deb. No. Carolina Con. p. 97.

[†] Debates Maryland Convention.

[‡] Elliot, vol. iii. p. 250.

control of Congress in this particular, and slaves will never be introduced among them. Yet the lapse of a few years, and Congress will have power to exterminate slavery within our borders."

In the Massachusetts convention, Gen. Heath said: * "Slavery is generally detested by the people of this Commonwealth, and I ardently hope that the time will soon come when our brethren in the Southern States will view it as we do, and put a stop to it." He then argues that, by ratifying the constitution, Massachusetts will not become a partaker with the South in this sin, on account of the independence of each state in its private affairs, and adds: "Congress, by their ordinance for erecting *new* States, some time since declared, that the new States shall be Republican, and that there shall be no slavery in them." Judge Dawes said: † "Although slavery is not smitten by an apoplexy," (by the constitution,) "yet it has received a mortal wound, and will die of consumption." Rev. Mr. Backus said: ‡ "I believe that, according to my capacity, no man abhors that wicked practice more than I do, and I would gladly make use of all lawful means toward the abolishing of slavery in all parts of the land. A door is now opened hereafter to do it, and each State is at liberty now to abolish slavery as soon as they please. Thus slavery grows more and more odious throughout the world."

I might quote scores of additional kindred testimonies, in proof that the best public sentiment of the time that adopted our Federal Constitution, was decidedly, though not fanatically, anti-slavery. I have thought it wise to delay thus long in proof of this point, because it seems impossible fairly to understand the facts in regard to the origin of our present government, or rightly to judge of its subsequent drift, without it.

* Elliot, vol. i. p. 124.

† Elliot, vol. i. p. 60.

‡ Elliot, vol. i. p. 151.

In this condition of the public mind, the convention met to draft the Constitution; George Washington in the chair. Twelve States were represented, Rhode Island declining to send.

The question of the rule by which representatives in Congress should be apportioned soon came up, and was largely debated. The Southern States claimed, in the language of Butler, of South Carolina,* “that the labor of a slave in South Carolina, was as productive and valuable as that of a freeman in Massachusetts,” and that the one ought to be counted against the other. The North replied, in the words of Wilson, of Pennsylvania, “Are the slaves to be admitted as citizens—then why not on an equality with white citizens? Are they to be admitted as property—then why is not other property to be admitted into the computation?” The discussion grew warm. Gouverneur Morris, of Pennsylvania, denounced the claim of the South, as “an encouragement to the slave trade, and an injustice to human nature. Slavery was a nefarious institution. It was the curse of Heaven on the States where it prevailed. He would sooner submit to a tax for paying for all the negroes in the United States, than saddle posterity with such a constitution.” Davie, of North Carolina, retorted that the South would never confederate unless their negroes could be counted, and “if the Eastern States meant to exclude them, the business was at an end.” Connecticut stepped in as a compromiser, and it was finally settled that five negroes should count for three white men—thus securing to the slave power a perpetual element of influence in Congress, in itself absurd and unjust, and, in its consequences fraught with infinite disaster to freedom, and holding out a perpetual political bounty for the continuance of the sin of slavery. Abbott Lawrence added to the political power of Massachusetts one vote, and one only. Had he removed to a Southern State, and invested his

* Madison Papers, and Secret Debates of Federal Congress.

property in negroes—in addition to his own vote, he would have added to the State in which he lived as much power in the General Government as it would have gained by the added votes of from two to three thousand freemen! As a consequence of this mistaken and nefarious policy, fifteen slave States, with a free white population of only a little more than six millions, have now thirty Senators in Congress, while sixteen free States, with a free white population of more than double that amount—or nearly fourteen millions—have only thirty-two Senators! As a consequence of this arrangement, the single State of Alabama has, to-day, as many extra Representatives in Congress—over the number she would be entitled to if a Northern State with her “property” unrepresented—as the entire representation of the State of New Hampshire. So that she really has an influence in national affairs equal to that of New Hampshire, given to her over and above that which is legitimately hers, as a bounty upon her slaveholding! The entire South, in this way, has an advantage of more than thirty votes in the House! As a consequence of this arrangement, an oligarchy of only* 347,525 slaveholders (only 278,705 of whom own more than one slave, and only 7,929 of whom own fifty slaves, or more, apiece,) is enabled to carry any point of its choice in a nation of thirty millions of people. As a consequence of this arrangement, every 413,813 Northern freemen are practically reduced to the same amount of political privilege in the Senate of the nation which is enjoyed by 206,175 Southerners. In other words, a freeman is

* Look at these facts. The free States have 144 members in Congress. The slave States have 90 members. Every Northern member represents 91,958 white persons. Every Southern member represents 68,725 white persons. The slave power has already clutched (without Kansas) 851,508 square miles, while freedom is already reduced to 612,259. So that slavery already has the advantage of freedom—in territory—by an amount 60,000 square miles greater than the entire domain of the Eastern and Middle States!

not quite half as well off as a slaveholder in the matter of political and national power.

This was the first compromise of the Constitution which has contributed to bring our land to its present unhappy condition. It never could have been consented to by our fathers but from the confident expectation that slavery was already in its decadence, and would soon be in its grave. It never ought to have been consented to at any price! Doubtless a failure to have formed a Union at that juncture would have had unpleasant results, but it can hardly now be the subject of a doubt that it would have been better for those who could, and would, have united justly, to have done so, and left the reluctant Southern States to have subsequently come in—as their necessities would soon have driven them to do—on terms of essential equity. Better have taken firm ground for moral right then, and trusted Providence to bring about a union, somehow, than to have admitted this grim skeleton to the marriage feast of the Confederacy.

The second compromise of the Constitution which has helped to bring us to our present state, was that, which—to please the South—legalized the continuance of the slave trade for twenty years. This, as well as the third, which provides for the rendition of fugitives, was adopted,—as will be made clear by a study of the Debates—against a strong moral repugnance, and with, not unreasonable, reluctance. The Southern States clamored for them; threatened, if they were not granted.* “South Carolina,” said Rutledge and the two Pinckney’s, “can never receive the plan, if it prohibits the slave trade.” Martin, of Maryland, retorted, “slaves weaken the Union, which the other parts are bound to protect; the privilege of importing them is therefore unreasonable. Such a feature in the Constitution would be inconsistent with the principles of the Revolution, and dishonorable to the American

* Hildreth, vol. iii, p. 515.

character." Roger Sherman "disapproved the slave trade, but, as the States now had the right to it, he would leave the matter as it was. The abolition of slavery seemed to be going on in the United States, and the good sense of the several States would, probably, by degrees, complete it." Ellsworth, of Connecticut, "was afraid we should lose two States," and talked timidly about anarchy and bloodshed.

Now it so happened that the East wanted navigation laws to favor their commerce ; and the South agreed to give the East that benefit, provided a compromise could be made on the slave trade. Pinckney, of South Carolina, "knew that the interest of the South demanded free commerce, but, considering the commercial losses of the Eastern States in the Revolution, and their liberal conduct (in yielding their prejudices against the slave trade,) he should go against any restrictions on the power of commercial regulations. He had prejudices against the Eastern men before he came here, but he would acknowledge he had found them as liberal and candid as any men whatever."*

Thus moral right was basely bartered for supposed commercial benefit, and the North got its navigation laws, and the South its twenty years' extension of the most horrible traffic which the world ever saw, and its fugitive slave clause. Alas ! that the Fathers could not have seen that, by these compromises of what they knew and felt to be moral right, for what they imagined would be pecuniary profit and the immediate comfort of an adopted government, they were mixing clay with the iron with which they were shaping the feet of this young republic—so that, by and by, a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, should break it in pieces ! They thought the course they took was expedient for the existing emergency. They knew that slavery was unprofitable in itself, and was becoming increasingly unpopular. The North

* Hildreth, vol. iii. p. 519.

saw it dying out all over its own territory, and they seem to have taken it for granted that it would soon become everywhere extinct, so that they would be gaining permanent benefit by conceding to a temporary evil. Ellsworth said publicly—and the Convention did not dispute him—“Slavery, in a little while, will not be a speck in our country.” No other source for recruiting the institution but the slave trade, was then thought of, and it was supposed that, after that trade became extinct, slavery itself would gradually disappear. There can be little doubt that the compromise, as it stood in the Northern mind, was the postponement, for a few years, of an event which all things seemed to render eventually certain, for the sake of immediate commercial benefit. If those patriots who signed the Constitution could come out of their graves to-day, they would be amazed to find slavery still in existence among us!

These compromises of the right for the apparently expedient, in our Federal Constitution, whereby slavery got its foot upon the very foundations of the government, and secured—as things happened—its subsequent mastery, I rank as the second external cause of our present condition as a people.

3. The third which I mention, was the occurrence of certain events which unexpectedly arrested the decay of slavery, and gave it new and unanticipated strength.

I refer to only two. In 1790, there were only 1,500,000 pounds of cotton produced in the United States. It was such a slow and expensive process to pick the down from the seed by hand, that the cleaning of a single pound, was a day's work for a slave. In this state of things, slave labor was unprofitable to the cotton-growing South. No price could be got for the cotton that would adequately remunerate the planter. By consequence, slavery drooped, even there, and Southerners began to consider the plan of abolition as a possible pecuniary benefit. But, in 1793—five years after the adoption of the Constitution—Eli Whitney invented the cot-

ton-gin, by which the slave, who before cleaned one pound of cotton a day, could clean one thousand pounds a day. By this single invention, the credit side of the pecuniary account of slavery was raised one thousand per cent! This put a different face upon the matter. It would pay to keep slaves, and raise cotton. The planters went about it zealously. In 1800, the census reported a crop of 35,000,000 of pounds—twenty times what it had been seven years before. Twenty years after, it had risen to 160,000,000 pounds. Now it has risen to more than 1,500,000,000 pounds! Judge Johnson, in the Georgia session of the United States Court, in 1807, said, in a decision in reference to Whitney's patent,* "The whole interior of the Southern States was languishing, and its inhabitants emigrating, for want of some object to engage their attention and employ their industry, when the invention of this machine at once opened views to them which set the whole country in active motion. Individuals who were depressed with poverty, and sunk in idleness, have suddenly risen to wealth and respectability. Our debts have been paid off, our capitals have increased, and our lands have trebled themselves in value. We cannot express the weight of obligation which the country owes to this invention."

This one machine has indirectly modified the political condition, and even the religious faith, of the country. When as yet it was not, philanthropists were agreed in deploring negro servitude, and many of them at the South were counselling its entire removal. Abolition societies existed in Virginia, and in every state North of her territory. The Bible was supposed to condemn slavery. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in 1788, issued a Pastoral Letter, in which they strongly recommended the abolition of slavery, and the instruction of negroes in letters and religion. The Methodist Episcopal Church—at that time largely in-

* American Mechanics, p. 121.

creasing in Maryland and Virginia—had even gone so far as to disqualify slaveholders to be members of its communion. Coke, the first bishop of that church, was especially zealous for this end. But the cotton-gin changed all this. New light shone through its cylinders upon the theory of politics, and thenceforth a slaveholding oligarchy is the synonyme for the American Republic. It shone upon philanthropy, and thenceforth the negro is systematically reasoned down from humanity into the brotherhood of brutes. It shone upon the Bible, and thenceforth the gospels of Jesus fade before the epistle to Philemon, which is accounted the pith of the New Testament!

The second event which should be briefly mentioned in this connection, as tending to arrest the decay of slavery, is the remarkable productiveness which proved to be a characteristic of the African race in the climate of the South: causing their numbers to be augmented in such rapid ratio as, on the one hand, to open thence a source of profit to the master who should turn his attention to slavebreeding, and, on the other, to demand new slave territory to give it room.

It is the testimony of an intelligent and accurate Virginian,* that “a gang of slaves on a farm will increase to four times their original number in thirty or forty years. If a farmer is only able to feed and maintain his slaves, their increase in value may double the whole of his capital, originally invested in farming, before he closes the term of an ordinary life.” As all these children, whoever may have been their father, by the slave code follow the condition of their slave mothers, it becomes obvious that, in about a generation, a State of which this rule held good, would nearly or quite quadruple its slave population. These it can profitably dispose of, provided there is, in some new slave territory, a brisk demand for human cattle. †

* Mr. Edmund Ruffin—Olmsted's “Seaboard Slave States,” p. 280.

† In 1832, a member of the Virginia Legislature, in reference to this human cattle trade, averred, “I do not hesitate to say, that, in its increase,

Thus arose the domestic slave trade, making the Northern slave states great breeding establishments, where slaves are raised for export, just as horses are raised for the same purpose in Vermont; and appealing to the selfish interest of the slave-owner to continue and increase his stock in a way, and to an extent, which has changed, more than all things else, the opinions and wishes of the Northern-Southern States on this subject. In 1774, the Virginia Convention *unanimously* resolved that "the abolition of domestic slavery is the greatest object of desire in those colonies where it was unhappily introduced in their infant state." Even so late as 1832, a debate occurred in the Virginia Legislature, in which one man* said, "Slavery, it is admitted, is an evil. It presses heavily against the best interests of the state. It converts the energy of a community into indolence; its power into imbecility; its efficiency into weakness. Being thus injurious, have we not a right to demand its extirpation? *Shall society suffer, that the slaveholder may continue to gather his virginial crop of human flesh?*" Several others expressed kindred sentiments. But the pressure of this slave trade has since so increased, that a man's life would hardly be safe should he now attempt such utterances in the city of Richmond.

4. *The fourth external cause which I mention, was the admission of new slave states,—under the pressure of the new vitality and expansiveness of the slave-system, but contrary to the understanding of the Fathers.*

consists much of our wealth."—Olmsted, p. 283. It is notorious that the present Governor of Virginia has asserted that, "if he could have had his way, California would have been a slave state, and, in that case, slaves would have been worth \$5000 apiece in Virginia." Put with this a remark from the "South Side View," (p. 78,) and see how much more tender of Virginians its author is than they are of themselves: "The charge of vilely multiplying negroes in Virginia is one of those exaggerations of which this subject is full, and is reduced to this, that Virginia, being an old state, fully stocked, the surplus black population naturally flows off where their numbers are less."

* Mr. Faulkner. Olmsted, p. 286.

I have already alluded to evidence of their understanding. It was stated in the clearest manner, in the Massachusetts convention, that slavery could not be extended, but that all new States must come in free. Wilson said, in the Pennsylvania Convention, "The new States which are to be formed, will be under the control of Congress in this particular, and slaves will never be introduced among them."

This understanding received a *quasi* recognition, for a long time, by the reception of new States in pairs, one slave and one free together, so as to retain the same proportion of power in the Senate. Vermont and Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio, Louisiana and Indiana, and Mississippi and Illinois—four such pairs had been received; when Alabama and Missouri were both passed to the credit of the account of oppression. And the slaveholding States have now increased from five to fifteen. Mean commercial bargaining—the "I will do this for you, if you will do that for me," theory of morals—relieved by occasional flashes of genuine, though mistaken patriotism—has been, perhaps, in every instance, the logic by which the South has prevailed against the North, and set at naught that sound principle, which ought to have hemmed slavery in to die on its own soil, and never to have allowed an inch of territory beyond what was first defiled with it, to be polluted with its foul touch.

5. *The fifth external cause, which I mention, of the existing state of things among us, was the establishment, in 1820, of the Missouri Compromise.*

Various circumstances contributed, about the year 1819, to awaken public indignation against the domestic slave-trade, and to call attention to the need of action on the general subject. Just then, Missouri knocked for admission to the Union. It was moved, by Tallmadge of New York, for substance, that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude should be permitted in her territory; and Taylor, of the same State,

moved to apply the same proviso to all the territory north of 36° 30'—the Northern line of Arkansas. The South was furious. Cobb of Georgia,* “did not hesitate to declare that, if the Northern members persisted, the Union would be dissolved.” Tallmadge replied, “Language of this sort has no effect upon me. My purpose is fixed. It is interwoven with my existence. Its durability is limited with my life. It is a great and glorious cause—setting bounds to slavery the most cruel and debasing the world has ever witnessed. It is the cause of the freedom of man! If a dissolution of the Union must take place, let it be so! If civil war, which gentlemen so much threaten, must come, I can only say, let it come! My hold on life is probably as frail as that of any man who now hears me; but, while that hold lasts, it shall be devoted to the freedom of man. If blood is necessary to extinguish any fire which I have assisted to kindle, while I regret the necessity, I shall not hesitate to contribute my own. I have the fortune and honor to stand here as the representative of freemen, who possess intelligence to know their rights, and who have the spirit to maintain them. As their representative, I will proclaim their hatred to slavery in every shape. As their representative, here will I hold my stand till this floor, with the National Constitution which supports it, shall sink beneath me.”

The bill was finally lost, for that year, between the Senate and the House. But this discussion stirred up the North. Public meetings were held in Trenton, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, † Salem, and many principal towns, to arouse the

* Hildreth, 2d series, vol. iii. p. 665.

† Under date of December 15th, 1819, Boston sent a memorial to Congress on the Missouri Question—from the pen of Daniel Webster—signed by Daniel Webster, George Blake, Josiah Quincy, James T. Austin, and John Gallison, as their Committee, in which this language is used:—“That slavery was ever tolerated in the Republic is, as yet, to be attributed to the policy of another government. No imputation, thus far, rests on any portion of the American confederacy. The Missouri territory is a new country.

public mind. The State legislatures, as they met, took up the matter. Pennsylvania appealed to the States to "refuse to covenant with crime," and *unanimously* asserted the duty as well as right of Congress to prohibit slavery west of the Mississippi. New Jersey and Delaware did the same, also, unanimously. New York, Ohio, and Indiana endorsed the same doctrine. Even Baltimore, by a public meeting, over which the Mayor presided, memorialized Congress against the further extension of slavery. When Congress met, Maine applied for admission, and the South compromised Maine and Missouri into one bill, to which Thomas, of Illinois, proposed the old 36° 30' amendment. This bill was finally carried—fifteen Northern members voting for it, and three absenting themselves when the vote was taken—by a vote of 90 to 87.*

John Quincy Adams wrote down the result in his diary, and added:† "The impression produced on my mind by the progress of this discussion is, that the bargain between freedom and slavery, contained in the Constitution of the United States, is morally and politically vicious, inconsistent with the principles upon which alone our revolution can be justified; cruel and oppressive, by riveting the chains of slavery, in pledging the faith of freedom to maintain and perpetuate the tyranny of the master; and grossly unequal and impolitic, by admitting that slaves are, at once, enemies to be kept in subjection, property to be secured and restored to their owners,

To permit it (slavery) in a new country; what is it but to encourage that rapacity and fraud and violence, against which we have so long pointed the denunciations of our penal code? What is it but to tarnish the proud fame of the country? What is it but to throw suspicion on its good faith, and to render questionable all its professions of regard for the rights of humanity, and the liberties of mankind?"

* John Randolph denounced this as "a dirty bargain," and the eighteen Northern men, as "dough faces,"—a pertinent epithet which has remained in use.

† Hildreth, 2d series, vol. iii. p. 694.

and persons not to be represented themselves, but for whom their masters are privileged with nearly a double share of representation. The consequence has been, that this slave representation has governed the Union. Benjamin portioned among his brethren has ravined as a wolf; in the morning he has devoured the prey, and at night he has divided the spoil. It would be no difficult matter to prove, by reviewing the history of the Union under this Constitution, that almost every thing which has contributed to the honor and welfare of the nation has been accomplished in spite of them; and that every thing unpropitious and dishonorable, including the blunders and follies of their adversaries, may be traced to them."

Thus, by gross treachery alike to the existing moral sense of the North, and to the first principles of morality, was another compromise inaugurated, by which the incalculable evils of slavery were let in upon a still further reach of territory.

6. *The sixth external cause which I name, was the repeal of this Missouri Compromise, in 1854.*

I need do no more than mention this. If that compromise had been right in essence, it would have been infamous to break it for slavery. And that it was itself a base treachery to freedom, can furnish no excuse for the baser treachery, which repealed it as soon as the South had obtained all possible advantage from it, and the hour was coming for the North to take its turn. This repeal was a wicked plot, and the violence and insult offered to parliamentary usage and the positions, and even persons, of Northern men, during the course of its passage, was but in keeping with its monstrous iniquity. If it was proposed by a Northern man, and received the sanction of Northern votes, and the signature of a Northern President—it was nevertheless a slaveholding measure, against which the conscience and feelings of the free revolted.

7. *The last external cause which I mention, for the existing state of things among us, is the plot, now fast approaching completion, of forcing slavery upon Kansas, and the territory beyond.*

The law of 1854 gave the decision in regard to slavery into the hands of the actual settlers ; and yet, in advance of the movement of emigrants toward the soil of the new territory, a great secret association was formed in Missouri for the purpose of taking the decision, by force, out of the settler's hands. And, as the time came for the ballot-box to be used, that ballot-box was taken possession of by armed invaders, and its decisions subverted to the support of slavery. Mock legislatures march over the border, and enact mock laws—as inherently intolerable and cruel, as they are unconstitutional and void ; men are arrested for “constructive treason,” for being so true to the law of the land as to refuse to obey these base counterfeits ; free State settlers are murdered in cold blood ; women are robbed and violated ; and riot runs loose over those fair plains, where, in the name of law, orgies, impossible elsewhere in Christendom, and too incredible for belief, did we not *know* that they are true, are daily occurrences. All this is not merely permitted, but encouraged, by the slave-power in the White House, and the Cabinet, and the Capitol, if, by any means, and by all means, free settlers may be so far intimidated and driven out and silenced, that the elections can be secured for slavery, and Kansas come into the Union as a slave State.

Such are, briefly, those external facts and governmental acts which have culminated in the anarchy which now reigns beyond the Missouri, and which is convulsing the nation as it never was convulsed before. Omitting many of a subordinate character, I have dwelt only upon those which, in my judgment, are linked together into the chain whereon hangs the present. If slaves had never trod the soil ; if the compromises of the Constitution had been resisted, and the nation

started fairly in its race for freedom ; if the cotton-gin had not made cotton-raising profitable, and cotton-raising had not made slave-breeding profitable, and so created a demand for retaining slavery, and expanding its area ; if new slave states had never been admitted, so that, as the Fathers hoped,* the curse would have been hemmed into, and smothered in, its original space ; if the Missouri compromise had neither been made nor broken, and if the Kansas act had not been shamelessly violated to insure the introduction and perpetuation of slavery there ;—that agitation and distress, which fill the North, would not now disturb our peace, and threaten our very existence as a nation. I need not delay to point out, any more clearly than I have already done, the family likeness of moral iniquity which rests upon them. The mean Dutch wretch who, having stolen twenty better men than himself, wished to make a little money by selling them to the Jamestown Colonists, no more really violated morality for gain than those who—Northerners and Southerners alike—have again and again compromised away what, by God's law, is righteousness, for what they imagined to be expediency.

But this bony skeleton of acts and facts only in part accounts for our condition. Whence have come the muscles and vitality that have made it so strong and terrible ? How are we to account for all the ferocity, the lack of principle, the contempt of the most sacred rights, the outrageous ruffianism, that have made such things possible ? To explain this, it is necessary to turn to the second division of our subject, and inquire :

* "Nothing is clearer, in the history of our institutions, than the design of the nation in asserting its own independence and freedom, to avoid giving countenance to the extension of slavery. The influence of the small but compact and powerful class of men interested in slavery, who command one section of the country, and wield a vast political control, as a consequence, in the other, is now directed to turn back this impulse of the Revolution, and reverse its principles."—J. C. Fremont.

II. WHAT ARE THOSE INTERIOR PRINCIPLES AND FACTS WHICH HAVE ASSISTED TO BRING US INTO OUR PRESENT CONDITION AS A PEOPLE?

I can only, in the briefest manner, hint at the proper unfolding of this branch of the subject—for volumes would be requisite to do it justice. I name, first, some in which North and South share alike.

1. *One is, an inordinate individual passion for wealth.* A man is so much rated among us by his wealth, that it may almost be called the chief end of American life to become rich. The consequence is, that Legislation is continually invoked, to aid individual speculation. Banks, Tariffs, Railroads, dispositions of the Public Lands, and all imaginable plans for private enrichment, are crowded on legislative notice. Many of these schemes are too much in a hurry to wait for investigation, many will not bear it; and so a resort to compromise enactments has become frequent. Representatives from one section of the country, having one set of interests, say to those from another section, having other interests “Give us this, which we must have, and we will give you that which you desire.” One or both projects may be for public plunder, with a view to private profit; but each wants its own, and so both are rolled into an “omnibus” bill, and run through into the dignity of law. This compromising feature of American law-making, growing largely out of individual haste to become rich in some other than the good old (but slow) way of honest and patient industry; whereby nice adjustments between the selfishness of different contestants takes the place of high regard for general justice and public benefit; and the question is not, “What ought to be?” but “What can be?” has gradually, yet greatly facilitated that legislation on slavery which has plunged the nation into its sea of troubles.

2. *Another internal cause, is our lax political morality.*

American politics long ago assumed the motto: "Whatever is, is right." God's law has been ignored. Nay, of late years, it has been made matter of public scorn, that some men believe in, and bow before, a statute higher than the Fugitive Slave Bill—a Bill, which, as it stands, would disgrace Siberia, and which no earthly enactment could make imperative upon a truly Christian conscience. This lax morality in our politics, which permits the Sabbath to be trampled under foot, and the whole Decalogue to be violated, by our public men, without rebuke or disgrace; has had much to do with hastening the evils of our present condition.

3. *Another internal cause is the remarkable craving for political office, which characterizes the American people.*

This is one of our weakest points as a nation. Doubtless it largely grows out of the freeness of our institutions, and the fact that, theoretically, any man can be anything, among us. The Presidency is the prize for which our high politicians gamble. And, as steel seeks magnet, lesser politicians seek lesser offices, all over the nation; which is kept in continual unrest by the struggle. All our present troubles have been precipitated upon us by the desire, (thank God! a fruitless one on his part) of one man to keep an office which he had, and of others to snatch it from his grasp. This is shameful, but it is true. And, as a most sober and bitter truth, it claims admission here.

But I hasten to hint at some internal causes, which are peculiar to slavery and the South.

4. *One is, the essential internal influence of slaveholding upon the master.*

Jefferson said, in his time, "The whole commerce between master and slave, is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one

part, and degrading submission on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it, for man is an imitative animal. The parent storms. The child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in a circle of smaller slaves, gives loose to his worst passions, and, thus reared, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by its odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manhood and morals, undepraved by such circumstances." Mr. Mason said, in the Virginia Legislature, about the same time, "They (slaves) produce the most pernicious effect on manners. Every master of slaves is born a petty tyrant." Similar are the admissions of the candid at the present time. Says a recent writer not suspected of any fanatical abolitionism :* "To one who was a most thorough lover of the system of slavery, I put the question in a favorable moment, 'What, in your view, is the greatest objection that can be made to slavery?' 'O,' said he, 'this irresponsible power. You cannot prevent its abuse while human nature is what it is.' " Says a Southern correspondent of the New York Observer :† "I believe slavery is a curse to the South, and many others believe it, who will not own it, on account of the fanatic efforts of the abolitionists. When I speak of it as a curse, I mean in all its relations of master and servant—the bad influence it has on our passions, upon our children, destroying that sense of moral responsibility which ought to bear upon us."

It is, in the nature of things, a fearful thing for one man to be the absolute master of another man. It is perfectly natural, that he who owns slaves, and from childhood has said to this one, go, and he goeth, and to another, come, and he cometh, and to all, do this, and they have done it; should grow up to feel that he has the same right to rule other people,

* Dr. Adams, "South Side View," p. 93.

† See "South Side View," p. 99.

that he has his slaves. He *has* just the same ; no less, no more. If it is right for him to say “do this” to his brother man, with a black skin, whom he has successfully stolen, he has just the same right to say it to his brother man, with a white skin, whom he has not, as yet, been able to steal. Successful larceny conveys no right. The slave-oligarchy have been, then, perfectly consistent with themselves, and with all the interior training of their system, when they have sought to domineer over the nation. The whole history of the relation of the South and North, in the government of the nation, is aptly characterized by Jefferson’s words, quoted above: “The most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submission on the other.”

5. *Another internal cause may be found in the immorality which slavery engenders.*

I will not say that it is impossible for a slaveholder to be a moral man ; but, I will say, that it is entirely in coincidence with the influences of his situation for him to be immoral. Conscience must, sometimes, trouble him in regard to the eighth commandment, of which he lives in perpetual and open violation ; stealing his slaves’ time, and strength, and life ; themselves—from themselves. God called it “men-stealing,”* and, since it is the truth, I don’t know that we need to be delicate about it.

Then—passing by all other related thoughts—it is enough to refer to the licentiousness, which is a radical and inseparable element of the system of American slavery. No slave can have legal marriage. He is driven into sexual vice, on the one hand, by the laws under which he lives, which forbid him to obey God’s law of wedlock ; and, on the other, by the pecuniary interest of his master, which demands the prolific increase of his slaves. It is hardly stating the case too

* See 1 Tim., i. 10, with Ex. xxi. 16, and Deut. xxiv. 7.

strongly to say, that it is practically impossible for a female slave to retain her chastity. If under a kind master, she is safe for a time ; by his whim, or misfortune, or death, she soon is brought to the auction block, where her market value is largely determined by her probable fertility.

Nor is this the worst feature of the facts. It is susceptible of the most revolting, yet overwhelming proof, that these poor creatures are systematically sacrificed to the vile passions of the whites. I quote only one or two of the most recent of scores of testimonies in my possession.

Says Mrs. Douglass, a Virginian woman, who was lately tried, convicted, and punished, in Virginia, for teaching slaves to read, contrary to law ; in a letter from her jail :* “ There is one great evil hanging over the Southern Slave States, destroying domestic happiness, and the peace of thousands. It is summed up in the single word *amalgamation*. It pervades the entire society. Its followers are to be found among all ranks, occupations and professions. The white mothers and daughters of the South have suffered under it for years—have seen their dearest affections trampled upon—their hopes of domestic happiness destroyed, and their future lives embittered, even to agony, by those who should be all in all to them, as husbands, sons, and brothers. I cannot use too strong language in reference to this subject, for I know that it will meet with a heart-felt response from every Southern woman.”†

* Olmsted, p. 601.

† “ A large planter (in Louisiana) told me the reason he sent his boys to the North to be educated was, that there was no possibility of their being brought up in decency at home. Another planter told me that he was intending to move to a free country on this account. He said the practice (of licentiousness) was not occasional, or general ; it was universal. ‘ There is not,’ said he, ‘ a likely-looking black girl in this State, that is not the par amour of a white man. There is not an old plantation in which the grandchildren of the owner are not whipped in the field by his overseer.’ ”—Olmsted, p. 602.

It was a fact well known to residents at Washington in 1850, that, among the humble mulatto hack-drivers of that city, was one who had the same

The *Cleveland Leader*, a few months ago, contained an amply-vouched account of the passage of a fugitive slave through Columbus, who was whiter than the average of Americans, and who, being fifteen years of age, was sent off by his own mother, the daughter of her master, (his father being that master's white son,) to save him from being carried South for a market. Unravel this, and you have these plain facts, which shed light on the system of slavery, as well as on the point immediately before us: A father holds his own daughter in slavery; she bears a son by her own half-brother; she is obliged to hurry that boy North by the under-ground railroad, to save him from being sent to New Orleans for sale by his own grand-father!

Under such a condition of society, it is not strange that a degraded standard of morality, in general, should be gradually developed in the community, which should educate men of passion rather than of principle; men who scruple at nothing, to gain their ends; whose consciences are so seared by habitual sin, that the gratification of their own desires, in all directions, becomes the law of their being.

Intemperance is congenial to this state of things. And those who are familiar with the facts in reference to the life of our public men in the Capitol of the nation, need not be told that absolute drunkenness and gross licentiousness are not only by no means unknown, but are hardly considered as disreputable there: while throughout the South, they certainly do not disqualify men for leading public sentiment, or for being placed again and again in the highest places of power and trust.

father with a Senator from a Slave State, who was then making a great noise in Congress. Having had a slight acquaintance with both, I could not help feeling that—for the public good—the wrong brother was in the Senate; and that the swarthier of the two resemblant faces, belonged to the better man.

6. *The last internal cause which I have time to suggest, is that brutality of manner which slavery naturally induces.*

This is kindred, indeed, to those causes already hinted. Yet its recent remarkable developments are such as to justify a few further words. Since slaves are governed by force, the Southern mind seems to grow up into the belief that all men are to be managed in the same way. Persuasion, to a slave-holder, whether on his plantation or elsewhere, does not so naturally occur as intimidation, as an expedient for the carrying of any point. He who, in private life, is accustomed to swing a heavy whip over his field gang, and to make himself successful there by oaths, and blows, and the varied resources of brute force ; when he stands before his fellow citizens, is very apt to fly at them with the same passion, and with similar weapons, if his wishes are in any manner thwarted by them. The world over, irresponsible and absolute power has always been found to generate brutal and ferocious personal manners ; and that we have now on our avenues and in our Senate House, the bludgeons and the beatings, the armed encounters, and the coward ambuscades of the old feudal Europe, is only proof that the essential injustice of feudalism, in its tyranny of the few over the many, with its demoralizing influences, has rooted itself upon our Southern soil. The civilization of the South to-day—in some great essentials—is the civilization of the time of the Black Prince, or of Louis the IXth.

Such are some of those internal principles, which, in my judgment, have given body and strength to the external facts before mentioned ;—which demanded, procured, and have used them for the national harm. When a citizen is saturated with that sense of irresponsible power and contempt for all human rights, which his own selfishness cannot appropriate, which inhere in the very idea of one man's holding another man as his slave ; when his entire morality is vitiated by the reflex influence of that relation upon himself and his household ; when he has thus become self-seeking, licentious, im-

perious, unscrupulous, unjust, profane, drunken and brutal, he is fitly trained to push, to the utmost, his own love of money, and power, and office, and to get the advantage of a comparatively cautious and conscientious Northern man, in those bargains and compromises, out of which right too often departs when expediency enters ; and which have been often and sadly substituted for that severe, even-handed and exact justice, which ought wholly to have shaped the practice, as it largely embellishes the theory, of our Federal Government. He is ready to devise, and push to the utmost, all possible external machinery of governmental enactments ; such as have already been devised and used as the ladder-steps, up which the rampant ruffianism of the slave-power has climbed in its gradual subjugation of the nation to its behest.

Such, I hold to have been the most important moral causes in American character and legislation, which have together brought us, as a nation, to our present standpoint. It cannot be untrue, to say, that nearly, if not quite, every one of them must have been more or less offensive to the clear eye of the Great God of Justice ;—is condemned by an enlightened conscience, and the pure ethics of the Bible. Men of the North and South have shared in the guilt. The former, it is true, most actively and unceasingly ; but the latter, in the Convention of 1787, by putting the tiger's whelp of slavery representation to nurse among the free State lambs, where the same mother's milk that should nurture all, should nerve it in the end to devour them, and then, by "compromising" away their prospective liberties, one by one, for some present imagined interest ;—mean compromises varnished into a goodly seeming by that well-worn falsehood, "for peace and for the Union !"

IS THERE ANY REMEDY FOR THIS? These are the facts upon which the light of the Gospel of Jesus is sought—has it any suggestion of comfort in response? There must be. God has made right, to be light. And it is always possible for

men and nations to do right. The right way may lead to scorn and suffering, but it leads back to God. And safety is only where God is.

Into the nature of this remedy, I could not rightly claim your patience sufficiently now, to enter at length—even if its details were not fitter for another time and place. In essence, it is simply the good old eternal Gospel—the rule for every sinner, high or low, and for every sin, individual or national; **REPENT, AND FORSAKE YOUR INIQUITIES.** Simply this; minutely and carefully applied to all the particulars of our exigency. Three divisions will include it:—

I. Remember that God has jurisdiction over nations and communities, and their sins; as well as over individuals.

We may not be a theocracy, but we are a democracy. And a democracy is just an aggregation of immortals, associated, during their mortality, for the performance of certain acts. And each one of those acts, as well as each one of those immortals, is under God's eye; is bound to accord with his law, by all high principles and eternal motives; must pass his final scrutiny.

God can destroy a proud and prosperous nation. He has done it. He can save a weak and divided one. He has done that. He can save by many, or by few. He has done both. He who holds famine and pestilence in his hand; who can make our summer fields fertile with showers, or dry them into the sand plains of Sahara; who can smite great rulers, and slay mighty statesmen; He must be remembered! We must recall him, and his will, into our calculations, as an indispensable element. We must weigh compromises, and platforms, and candidates, and consequences, in his balance; or we shall do nothing that will be rightly done, or that will stay done!

II. We must confess to him all our sins, which have respect to our relationship as citizens, as well as all our other sins.

Every time we have voted, God has made a record of it to our credit, or against us. Every time we have said anything, or written anything, or done anything, which has gone to influence any national act ; to help or to hinder any national plan, or any sectional plan ; God has noted it, and will remember it when we are judged. We must answer for all our mercenary compromises—doing what we knew was wrong, for the sake of some tariff or navigation law. And if we have ever done anything through want of faith, he has that in memory ;—as, if we have said, “there is danger that the Union will be dissolved, and all things come to ruin unless we agree to this Fugitive Slave Bill ; which is horrible, but not so horrible as disunion would be ;”—lacking confidence in him to take care of the Union if we followed his commands, and volunteering to his omnipotence the aid of our treachery to his word.

Man does not forgive without penitence, and if we expect God to forgive us, we must pour out before Him our humble and contrite confessions. “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper : but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

III. *Finally—and I might almost say, as a practical matter, chiefly—we must FORSAKE these sins.*

The forsaking of sin is at once the pledge of the genuineness of professed repentance, and its first fruits in the life. Without it there is no repentance.

Here, it seems to me, many fail, in their discussions of this subject of our national duties. I have read eloquent sermons, lately delivered, in which most wise and weighty words were uttered in respect to our need of recalling God to our remembrance, and confessing our sins, and praying and fasting before Him ; but in which there was no word touching future political action. Now, if a sin is a sin in relation to politics, it must be repented of in relation to politics, and forsaken in relation to politics ;—which requires action. If all the border-

ruffians in Kansas were to-day to repent of their wickedness and confess their crimes, we should demand, yet further, the forsaking of future repetitions of their former guilt—which would be something more than prayer and fasting, good as these are in their place. So, I claim that we must not insult God by confessing to him our past wrong-doings, or non-doings, (which are sometimes the worst-doings), in politics, without we propose to forsake the sin, as well as to repent of and confess it. And if we forsake it, then our repentance takes us out into the strife, and binds us to battle there for truth, and freedom, and God. If our remembrance of God, and confessions to Him, are to amount to any thing, we must henceforth have no complicity with slaveholding guilt. If our fathers have compromised away the most precious part of their heritage and ours; we may not be able to take back their losses, as we cannot their acts;—but we are surely absolved from repeating them. *We* are on the stage now. We are to act in God's name, and for the weal or woe of ourselves and those who come after us, not merely, but, in a sense, for the entire on-looking world. Nations afar gaze at us, and hold their breath to see what our next move will be. It must carry the destinies of freedom abroad as well as here!

I am but one among you. I claim not much wisdom. But I do claim an honest purpose to do right, regardless of personal consequences. Here I take my stand! I preach no politics. I counsel no particular man for President—except that he be Freedom's champion. I urge no particular Congressional measures, no scheme for Kansas relief—save that all be done for Freedom. But I do say; we have all sinned and done iniquity in thy sight, O God! It was a sin to bring slaves here; a sin to keep them here; a sin to adopt a constitution that built in this dry-rot for the decay of a fabric, else so glorious and so fair; a sin to admit a single new slave-state or territory; a sin to compromise about it; a sin to do or suffer any thing which should favor or connive at the

extension and permanence of a system so black and bad ; a sin to leave selfish politicians to run away with our liberties, while the good have slept and said, " Politics are not for us ! " This is all sin ! Our fathers did it, and we have done it ; and now this whirlwind cometh out of the South to overturn the fabric of our weakened liberties. God alone can manage whirlwinds ! I will return unto God, confessing and forsaking my sin, and doing works " meet for repentance." Never more, as a citizen, or as a man, will I knowingly do any thing, or vote any thing, that shall recommit that sin ; that shall give aid or comfort to slavery, or its advance any-whither. My first question, my last question, concerning any plan or measure, shall be, Is it sound for liberty ? However imperfect with this, I will prefer it to perfection itself without it.

Nay, more ! Since restitution is the first duty that follows repentance, I will seek, in all righteous ways, to undo all—politically or socially—which I may have done unwittingly to aid oppression. I devise here no policy. I hint no expedients. But, with all my heart, I pledge myself to a high and holy duty !

It looks dark, I know, and timidity whispers—If we take such a stand as this, what will become of the Union and the Nation ? But, brethren, I have faith in God. I believe, notwithstanding all our sins, that he loves this nation, and that notwithstanding all our guilt, he will preserve it, if his children are faithful to his commands. I prefer to do right, and wholly trust Him to save us ; than to trust Him half, and trust myself and my own wrong-doing, the other half !

Will you do the same ? Listen to the sad, sad sounds that are borne upon the far western breeze from our New England kindred, suffering there for righteousness' sake ; to the sad, sad sounds that sweep up to us from the cotton fields and rice swamps of the South, where our sable brethren weep, because " on the side of their oppressors is power, but they have no comforter," and tell me, WILL YOU NOT DO THE SAME ?

